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SUBJECT: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON FRIENDS OF PAKISTAN

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Planning for the Friends of a Democratic Pakistan is moving forward, albeit slowly. On January 27, Jean Arnault negotiated with the MFA a draft framework for his future participation as a UN advisor to the Friends under UNDP auspices. Ambassador met separately with Arnault to urge him to take on a much-needed role as coordinator for donor assistance; Arnault said he was ready to move to Islamabad full time to work on Friends coordination. The GOP has narrowed down a list of potential additional members of the Friends' group, but MFA has asked for U.S. and UK concurrence on inviting Russia to join. Arnault believes the optics of excluding one UN Permrep member are not ideal. UNSYG Moon will visit Islamabad February 4. MFA will continue to coordinate between the GOP and Friends, and General Secretary to the President Salman Farouqi will be coordinating internal GOP preparations. Farouqi confirmed the action plan Chaudhry sketched out to A/DCM, which includes GOP outreach to the World Bank on the proposed Border Trust Fund, an early February meeting with Friends' Ambassadors in Islamabad, experts' meetings February 20-21, and a high officials' meeting (time and place TBD) to tee up a proposed ministerial in Tokyo later in March. Embassy will meet with other Friends' members January 30 to compare notes and reactions to the GOP's plans. End Summary

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador and A/DCM met with Jean Arnault January 25. He previewed his proposals for working as a UN advisor through the auspices of the UNDP offices in Islamabad and said he was ready to move to Islamabad full time to support the Friends effort. Ambassador stressed the dire need for broader donor cooperation, and Arnault took that on board, saying he could begin to work with Friends and potentially expand his advisory role. He will meet with ISI DG Pasha and hopefully Chief of Army Staff Kayani (Arnault has a number of friends in the Pakistani military who have served in UN

peacekeeping missions), as well as with the MFA, Salman Farouqi, and other Friends' Ambassadors.

¶3. (SBU) In meetings January 14 and 16, MFA Additional Secretary for South Asia Aizaz Chaudhry outlined the GOP's action plan:

January TBD

Economic Affairs Division to contact World Bank to discuss its support for a Border Trust Fund. Aizaz was unclear if this actually had been done or was in process.

January 23

Jean Arnault arrives in Islamabad to discuss modalities of UN coordination.

January 29

Internal GOP meetings to review the project proposals from the different ministries for presentation at the experts' group meetings. FM Qureshi would chair the meeting and the Ministers of Finance and Interior and the deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission would also be invited. The GOP will also review the issue of expanded membership. Aizaz plans to circulate a proposed list of new members quietly to Friends' member countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE and China to ensure everyone is on board. The latest thinking is that the Nordics, the Netherlands, Spain, South Korea, and Malaysia be invited. Chaudhry asked for our views on including Russia, although noting that there had been no contact with Russia as

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yet. Jean Arnault strongly supported including Russia as it would be preferable not to exclude just one UN Permrep country. (Note: Arnault told the Ambassador privately that he had reached out in New York to both Russia and India; neither wanted to contribute but both supported a UN advisory role in Friends. End Note) Chaudhry said that Iranian membership was no longer under consideration for the time being. The GOP will also discuss how to frame its public diplomacy message, as well as how to differentiate the Friends from the Donors.

February 7

Meeting with current Friends' Ambassadors in Islamabad to provide copies of the experts' presentations for circulation. At this point GOP would announce which countries they would extend invitations to beyond the core group.

February 20-21

Experts' Meetings in Islamabad
Chaudhry envisions that, in addition to reviewing the projects, the experts would provide policy suggestions for the High Officials.

March, first week

High Officials' meeting, place TBD but probably Islamabad, to prepare for the Ministerial. Chaudhry was unsure whether it might be best to have this meeting immediately before the Ministerial in the same location. He noted that Pakistan planned to send the FM to the Friends' meeting and the Finance Advisor to the Donors' Conference.

March TBD

Ministerial in Tokyo (TBC) after the Donors' Conference.

¶4. (SBU) The U.S. and UK both urged that the experts' presentations be prioritized and not just a wish list of uncompleted projects. Chaudhry said he had received the same advice from the Japanese and Saudis.

¶5. (SBU) In Ambassador's meeting with the Makhdoom Shahab-ud-Din, Chairman of the Planning Commission, on January 16, Acting Secretary Jawaid Akhtar mentioned that one project the GOP was focusing on was "skill development of the masses", i.e., vocational education targeting unemployed youth which would start as a pilot project in the Punjab, and

eventually reach 200,000 young people throughout the country.
(Note: this proposal has a definite link to security issues, and, as such, is an improvement over the list of infrastructure projects presented at the November 18 Friends' meeting in Abu Dhabi. End Note)

¶6. (SBU) Also on January 16, UK Foreign Secretary Miliband met with Salmon Farouqi, the General Secretary for President Zardari. Farouqi confirmed the plan outlined by Chaudhry and said he would send a senior official to the World Bank in Washington to press the idea of a Trust Fund. It remains unclear if the Fund will cover all of Pakistan, the border area, or just the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The GOP is clearly struggling to play the leading role in the Friends' group. The MFA has not relinquished control of the process to the President's office, but is moving ahead cautiously, even with fairly straightforward items such as new members and role of the UN,

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issues where it was given fairly wide leeway in Abu Dhabi. The prospect of a Donors' Conference at the same time as the Friends' Ministerial remains a source of confusion, especially as many donors have expressed interest in contributing to projects (which is the Friends' focus) rather than straight budgetary support. Embassy plans to convene a meeting of the current Friends (minus Pakistan) on January 30 to go over their countries' plans and expectations prior to the February 7 meeting of the Friends' Ambassadors.

PATTERSON